

## TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

### APPROVED

HELD ON May 18, 2021

The Transportation Advisory Board of the City of Mesa met online via Zoom, on May 18, 2021, at 5:30 p.m.

<u>TAB Members Present</u>	<u>TAB Members Absent</u>	<u>Others Present</u>
Megan Neal (Chairperson)	Dave Bergner	Ryan Hudson
David Winstanley (Vice Chairperson)	Vern Mathern	Sabine Ellis
Christopher Scott	Rodney Jarvis	Erik Guderian
Sam Gatton		RJ Zeder
Ryan Wozniak		Stephanie Derivan
Georgina Marin		Jason Coon
Melissa Vandever		Robert Forest
Michelle McCroskey		Jess Parks
		Garrett Topham
		6023960538 – Luis Montes

Chairperson Neal called the May 18, 2021, Transportation Advisory Board meeting to order at 5:35 pm.

**Item 1. Approval of the minutes of the Transportation Advisory Board meeting held on January 19, 2021.**

It was moved by Board Member Wozniak, seconded by Board Member Scott, that receipt of the above-listed minutes be approved.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

**AYES** – Neal – Winstanley – Scott – Gatton - Wozniak – Marin - Vandever – McCroskey

**NAYS** – None

**Item 2. Acknowledge outgoing Board Member Vern Mathern**

Board member Vern Mathern was not present at the meeting. Chairperson Neal acknowledged Board Member Mathern's participation and appreciated his service.

**Item 3. Annual election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson**

Sabine Ellis with the City of Mesa Transportation Department introduced herself. Ms. Ellis explained that Megan Neal was the only person nominated for Chairperson therefore a vote is not necessary. She congratulated Chairperson Neal on her appointment to Chairperson for the upcoming year, remaining in her current role.

Board Member Wozniak and Vice Chairperson Winstanley were nominated for Vice Chairperson. After votes were tabulated, it was announced that Vice Chairperson David Winstanley would remain as Vice Chairperson for the upcoming year.

**Item 4. Items from citizens present**

Board Member Wozniak advised the board that Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) was going through the regional transportation plan if anyone would like to review it. He explained that this was the plan that would be used moving forward for the region for the regional transportation framework and whether more focus is given to adding capacity or improving existing facilities/system optimization on the region's existing transportation network. Board Member Wozniak discussed that MAG is soliciting community feedback on the scenarios listed in the plan.

Vice Chairperson Winstanley asked for a link to the plan/report.

Board Member Wozniak advised that it could be access through [azmag.gov](http://azmag.gov) and [ourmomentumplan.com](http://ourmomentumplan.com).

**Item 5. Hear and discuss an update on the Valley Metro Title VI Proposed Policy Changes**

Ed Jones, Transit Coordinator with the City of Mesa, introduced himself along with Jessi Parks and Robert Forest from Valley Metro. He indicated that Valley Metro staff would be giving a presentation on the Valley Metro Title VI Proposed Policy Changes.

Mr. Frost from Valley Metro explained Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act is intended to ensure the fair delivery of public services. Since Valley Metro gets Federal Funds, they are subject to the Title VI regulations. These regulations include two policies established in 2013, Major Service Change Equity Policy and Fare Equity Policy.

He explained that when a decision is made to make a major service change (like Valley Metro is currently planning), they must follow the Major Service Change Equity Policy. A major service change is a 25 percent or more change. Then they must look at the respective impact to minorities and low-income ridership and try to minimize it. Their current threshold margin of error is three to four percent, they are planning to change it to five percent.

Vice Chairperson Winstanley asked for the source of their data.

Mr. Frost said if it is an existing route, they use data from the Origin and Destination Survey that Valley Metro periodically conducts.

Vice Chairperson Winstanley asked if people on the route are asked those questions.

Mr. Frost said yes, the Origin and Destination Survey is done. He further explained that survey collectors are placed on the routes and ask riders to answer the questions.

Mr. Frost explained the formula for determining impact to minorities and low-income riders.

Chairperson Neal asked to clarify how often the Origin and Destination Survey is done.

Mr. Frost replied that it is done every three to five years.

Chairperson Neal asked how often major service changes are done.

Mr. Frost responded that changes are done twice a year in April and October. Valley metro gets proposed changes from each City, checks for impact following the formula, then makes suggestions on how to minimize any impacts to minority and low-income riders.

Mr. Frost continued by explaining the Fare Equity Policy. This policy reviews the impact of fare changes on minority and low-income populations. Every time there is a fare change, an analysis must be done. The last fare change was in 2013. In the past, they compared the local and express fares. Going forward, they will compare all their services and fare media. This means they will review the all-day pass, 7-day pass, 15-day pass, 31-day pass, and the express pass. They will review all fares before and after the proposed change, compare minority, non-minority, low-income, and non-low-income users. The current threshold to determine if a fare change would result in an impact is at four percent. Valley Metro is proposing to change it to five percent.

Mr. Frost said he is here to get input from the public, advisory boards, and commissions on the appropriate thresholds for their policy. They would like to know if the thresholds in the presentation are adequate or should they be looking at something a little bit different.

Mr. Frost explained that Ms. Parks had information to pass on as well.

Ms. Parks added that this information is up on Valley Metro's event page for anyone to review or get a more in depth look at the information. There is also an open feedback form for any questions. She reiterated that they are taking this information to mainly commissions and advisory boards for feedback because it is so technical, but it is available for the public to log their comments and questions.

Mr. Frost thanked the board for listening to his presentation.

Board Member Wozniak asked if this would be provided in more than one language since it is targeting minorities.

Mr. Frost said it is currently only provided in English, but it can be transcribed into another language.

Ms. Parks added that the Valley Metro website is set up to translate using Google Translate.

Chairperson Neal inquired if the platinum passes, and other special passes would be part of the equity analysis.

Mr. Frost said they would be part of the equity analysis. He explained that Valley Metro is getting ready to change how their fare media is done, that is why they are starting to do a Title VI analysis. He said they are working on several changes like a mobile app and possibly a smart card where money can be loaded onto a hard card instead of having paper. He said these changes will take some time to roll out.

Mr. Frost asked Mr. Jones if he would like to add anything since he has been a part of this process.

Mr. Jones added that the City of Mesa has a platinum pass for City employees to use for commuting to and from work. The charges on this platinum pass are charged back to the city under the City's trip reduction program (commuting to and from work). There is also a pass for the disabled community called the ADA Platinum Pass. The fare is paid for by the region off the PTF funding. These passes help by allowing people to use the transit system instead of having to use the more expensive paratransit.

Chairperson Neal thanked the group for their presentation.

**Item 6. Hear and discuss a presentation on the Mesa Moves: Active Transportation Projects Discussion**

Erik Guderian, Deputy Transportation Director, introduced himself and Transportation Director RJ Zeder. He explained that he would be giving a presentation on the Mesa Moves Bond Program, specifically talking about part of the program that includes active transportation projects. He thanked the Mesa Bike and Pedestrian Staff for the many hours they put in to help with a lot of the public outreach.

Mr. Guderian explained that we are here because voters approved a 100-million-dollar bond, that combined with \$62 million in Maricopa Association of Government funding, means the City of Mesa has 162 million dollars to spend in the Mesa Moves Program. He said there are three different types of projects specified in the program. In January, he spoke about regional roadway projects and arterial road reconstruction projects. Those account for \$142 million of the \$162 million available. The remaining \$20 million is dedicated toward active transportation projects. Active transportation projects are being defined as human powered transport which would be bike and pedestrian program projects. Staff has been working on more public engagement before identifying specific projects.

Mr. Guderian explained the costs associated with different types of shared use paths which can range from \$2 million (without pathway amenities) to \$3 million per mile (with pathway amenities such as benches, rest areas, additional landscaping, theming, and other amenities).

Vice Chairperson Winstanley asked how much it costs to build street cross-sections for comparison.

Mr. Guderian said it is generally \$10 to \$15 million a mile for an arterial street (for planning purposes). He explained that this number depends on a lot of variables related to the specific street cross-section.

Mr. Guderian continued to explain cost variations if changes are made on a street to provide enhanced pedestrian and bike facilities. These types of pedestrian and bike enhancements can be broken into two general categories which include projects that do not require moving curb lines and projects that do require moving curb lines. For the projects that do not require moving curb lines, projected costs are \$0.5 to \$2 million per mile of street. For the more impactful projects that do require moving curb lines (taking away a travel lane and repurposing the space with a widened sidewalk facility on each side of the street), such as the Fiesta District Project on Southern Avenue in West Mesa, projected costs can range from \$2 to \$10 million per mile.

Mr. Guderian showed existing, programmed, and future pathways. For existing, Mr. Guderian highlighted the Consolidated Canal Path, which ultimately ties into the Town of Gilbert to the south and City of Tempe to the north, the Fiesta District complete streets project, and other pathways along the Eastern Canal and the SR-202 freeway. For the programmed projects, Mr. Guderian explained that these projects are currently under design or in construction, mentioning the pathway along the South Canal, the Lehi Crossing Shared-Use Path, and the pathway along the SR-202 in Southeast Mesa.

Vice Chairperson Winstanley mentioned that some pathways were not showing.

Mr. Guderian explained the maps only show City of Mesa Pathways. It does not show pathways that belong to other cities. He said the City of Mesa plans to eventually connect into the other municipalities' pathways.

Mr. Guderian continued to explain that over the past 10 years, the City of Mesa has gone through two iterations of the Mesa Bicycle Master Plan and there is an identified ultimate goal of what we would like the active transportation network to look like. The goal is to create a ring around the City utilizing networks along the SR-202 freeway, north-south connections along the canal systems, enhancements on Main St east of Gilbert Rd where there is excess vehicular lane capacity that could be converted to bicycle and pedestrian enhancements through the middle of the City, better active transportation networks into the Downtown Mesa Area, and adding on to the Fiesta District complete streets network. Mr. Guderian explained that Mesa Transit is undergoing several studies that are looking at StreetCar and BRT in West Mesa and there is a focus to find ways to tie into those transit-oriented improvements.

Mr. Guderian explained the public engagement process and that there was a survey available until May 9<sup>th</sup> that sought to identify the public's opinion on desires for the active transportation network in Mesa and what is important to pedestrians and cyclists in Mesa. He continued that the presentation tonight is meant to continue the public feedback and gain feedback from the Transportation Advisory Board members. Mr. Guderian explained that the survey results, the feedback received tonight, and all other information would be presented to the Mesa City Council in the Summer to ultimately work towards finalizing a list of projects that will go into the Mesa Moves Program.

Mr. Guderian gave a high-level overview of the public survey and respective results/takeaways. The survey was up from April 1<sup>st</sup> through May 9<sup>th</sup> and was advertised through all the social media platforms, sent to all neighborhood contacts through NextDoor, through local bicycle shops throughout Mesa with a QR code, the Mobile Arts Based Engagement Lab, and with translation in Spanish.

Mr. Guderian went through each of the survey questions and respective answers from the public. The survey results showed that off-street pathways and shade were most important to pedestrians while off-street pathways and separated bike lanes were most important to cyclists. Most respondents wanted better connections to parks and recreation with restaurants and shopping coming in second. The survey showed most people do not feel comfortable riding in the current on-street bike lanes. Most would feel more comfortable if the bike lane was separated by a curb or some other form of delineation/buffer from the vehicular travel lanes. Most of the respondents believed that Mesa could increase bike trips with more off-street pathways along canals and freeways. The survey also showed that most people would like more pathway miles with minimal amenities (benches, artwork, trash cans, etc.). Three-quarters of the respondents indicated that they would prefer more pathway miles with less amenities as opposed to less pathway miles with more amenities.

Mr. Guderian summarized that ultimately there looks to be an interest to increase shared-use pathway miles targeted more on the recreational side but to also have more on-street bike facilities that provide more than just the traditional bike lane. The primary project types that we are looking at are complete streets, which could include shared bike and pedestrian paths along the street separated by landscaping and lighting, or separated bike lanes delineated with raised median, and shared-use pathway projects which are traditionally along canals and freeway right-of-way. Mr. Guderian also posed the question for Board members to give feedback on whether they would like to see increased shade elements on sidewalk facilities, given responses from the public survey focused on providing more shade.

Mr. Guderian proceeded to highlight some projects that Mesa staff has identified as potential focus areas for consideration. The projects have previously been identified through the Mesa Bike Master Plan and corridors that have been identified through the MAG design assistance program. He identified potential projects on Center St and Main St that would enhance on-street bike facilities connecting to existing canal shared-use paths and into the Downtown Mesa Area. There is also a desire to continue building out the canal pathways with the next focus along the Eastern Canal. Mr. Guderian also provided a full list of these potential projects to consider and noted a total estimated cost of \$44 million for all highlighted, potential projects. He said there is not enough Mesa Moves funding at this time to do all these projects, but it is the ultimate vision to continue towards the ultimate plan.

Mr. Guderian asked for public comments and then for Board members to give their feedback and pose any questions.

Chairperson Neal asked for public comments.

Resident Luis Montes expressed his view that safer bike paths were needed on roads for commuters more than recreational bike paths. Mr. Montes mentioned that he was part of BikeMesa, and he described some of the bicycle crashes that have occurred recently in Mesa. He

expressed his view that the streets were dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians and there needs to be a focus on equitable transportation for active transportation commuters. Mr. Montes explained that he did not support the Lehi Crossing Shared-Use Pathway project. More focus should be put on making connections for pedestrians and bicyclists and creating a network.

Chairperson Neal then asked for comments from Board members.

Mr. Guderian added that Mesa staff is seeking feedback on the survey results, the public comments, the types of projects that should be prioritized by the Mesa Moves Program, any specific projects/locations that should be prioritized, and other related items Board members would like the Mesa Council to consider.

Board Member McCroskey spoke about the Lehi Crossing Shared-Use Path being used as a safe place for horse riders as well as others as the area continues to develop. She pointed out that the survey showed most respondents wanted off-street pathways. She said she understands and supports wanting safer on-street bike facilities. Ms. McCroskey explained that the active transportation improvements should consider all users which include bikes, pedestrians, equestrians, and other active uses.

Board Member Wozniak asked Mr. Guderian to expand on how data is being interpreted and prioritization was being determined from that.

Mr. Guderian said they have not prioritized any projects; he is only showing projects that have been identified either through the Mesa Bike Master Plan and through the CIP process. Staff is looking for public and TAB comments tonight then City Council will be the ones to ultimately decide priorities.

Board Member Wozniak asked to clarify how these projects were picked.

Mr. Guderian explained they were ones that have been talked about through the master plan process. He said priorities change. One item that is looked at is if the projects are feasible. Mr. Guderian gave an example of taking away existing vehicular travel lanes to enhance on-street bike facilities and whether it was feasible to do that in certain locations.

Board Member Wozniak referenced the Bike Master Plan and that the backbone of the network is the on-street bike lanes that the riders are not feeling safe riding on, per the survey results. Mr. Wozniak discussed the Southern Avenue project that Mr. Guderian shared earlier and pointed out a key importance for the return on investment from more comfortable facilities and reaching more bike riders. He described national guidance from NACTO promoting raised, curbing protection, and keeping bike facilities separate from pedestrian facilities. Board Member Wozniak also discussed how street design and allocation can impact the adjacent development patterns and a greater return on investment for the city. He expressed his views on incorporating safer on-street bike lanes to provide more equitable and sustainable travel options which has the potential to reduce vehicle congestion and promote a better quality of life, safer facilities, health benefits and more. He expressed his concern over the survey questions and priorities presented and wondered if there were blind spots in them.

Vice Chairperson Winstanley asked Board Member Wozniak to clarify his view with specific examples.

Board Member Wozniak explained further that the future network appears to follow canal paths which means there will still be a lack of a network. He said we should look at taking lanes from vehicles, so the arterial roads do not look like an extension of our freeways.

Vice Chairperson Winstanley posed the questions of if this was possible with the budgets that are available.

Board Member Wozniak acknowledged that the money is not there now to create this network-wide, but if we unlock corridor by corridor, it could give a better return on investment, a better tax base, and a different projection from the one that we are on.

Vice Chairperson Winstanley requested more information to explain how this increases the budget.

Board Member Wozniak explained that if we increase density in areas where the community is desiring an alternative, more livable future, then we increase tax base per acre which will support the infrastructure we deserve. He explained it is not something that we are used to seeing but it is being paid attention to across the country.

Board Member McCroskey asked Board Member Wozniak if he was saying more people per acre equals more revenue per acre which provides more resources.

Board Member Wozniak said there are firms that do tax revenue minus liability return on investment. When you have thriving communities see that investment, infill, opportunity to invite more neighborhoods you are seeing a big return on investment. That makes for a more sustainable future.

Board Member McCroskey acknowledged what Board Member Wozniak was saying but explained she did not agree with everything about solely prioritizing on-street facilities. She said she feels we need a balance of all of it, including off-street, canal pathways and on-street enhanced facilities.

Board Member Wozniak asked how to have a balance of bike lanes next to 45 mile per hour travel lanes.

Board Member McCroskey explained that sometimes bike lanes have to be next to travel lanes out of necessity to get from point A to point B, but she feels the city is trying to get off-street bike paths especially along the canals which she agrees with.

Board Member Vandever added her concerns about people needing to bike on major roads to get to the light rail or other places and noted a specific location near Gilbert Rd and the US-60. She described Gilbert Rd between Baseline Rd and Southern Ave as being a six-lane road that poses safety concerns for bike users, and she would like a safer way taken into consideration. Board Member Vandever explained that residents need safe outlets and routes to get to transit



facilities such as the light rail and bus stops and that should be considered when identifying projects.

Vice Chairperson Winstanley stated that he agreed with the survey results, and it is consistent with those that he knows in the biking community. He questioned the routes along SR-202 and asked if anyone would use them.

Mr. Guderian explained that while the contractor was still building the first phase of this pathway along the SR-202, people began to use it. The city had to find a way to stop the public from using it until the contractor could finish project construction. The hope is that the usage will continue to increase as the pathway miles extend and the area continues to be built up.

Vice Chairperson Winstanley asked if there is a reason the MGS segment does not connect to the SR-202 path.

Mr. Guderian said the reason is the difficulty getting across the RWCD Canal and the East Maricopa Floodway. In discussions, a grade separated crossing was not feasible and it was decided to swing down to Ray Road and then back up Power Road to get across those barriers to the Gilbert section.

Vice Chairperson Winstanley voiced his concerns about going along those major roads, Ray Rd and Power Rd specifically.

Mr. Guderian acknowledged his concerns and said as part of the project, the City would widen the sidewalk to provide the separated area, rather than on-street bike lanes.

Vice Chairperson Winstanley asked where the stoplight would be to cross Power Road.

Mr. Guderian said he would have to get back to him on the details which would be worked out in the design process.

Vice Chairperson Winstanley questioned if the designers ride bikes and if they ride the paths when they are done.

Mr. Guderian responded yes. He added that there are becoming more designers in the Phoenix area that have bike and pedestrian expertise and the city is trying to use them as much as possible when designing these facilities.

Chairperson Neal asked if any of these projects are connecting regional paths across municipalities.

Mr. Guderian stated the Eastern Canal Project would connect into Gilbert. Also, the section along the SR-202 would connect into Gilbert. He added the section of the South Canal through north Mesa is part of the Sun Circle Trail which is a Maricopa County Regional Trail.

Chairperson Neal said it is challenging to know if we are building these paths in the right location and seeing the future connections helps communicate that these are the right locations. She

described the importance of making connections and how it relates to development, densities, and land uses to identify those useful connections are being made to destinations.

Chairperson Neal thanked staff for their presentation.

Chairperson Neal advised the board that City Council acknowledged their previous minutes.

It was motioned by Vice Chairperson Winstanley, seconded by Board Member Marin, to adjourn the meeting.

**AYES** – Neal – Winstanley – Scott – Gatton - Wozniak – Marin - Vandever – McCroskey

**NAYS** – None

Meeting was adjourned at 7:10 pm